

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Weber Basin High School
7400 South Cornia Drive
Ogden, Utah 84405**

September 16, 2003



Utah State Office of Education
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**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**WEBER BASIN HIGH SCHOOL
7400 South Cornia Drive
Ogden, UT 84405**

September 16, 2003

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

A major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate inservice growth and school improvement. Consequently, requirements include not only meeting the standards of the Utah State Office of Education, but also completing a school evaluation every six years.

School evaluation is that effort by the local school staff to take a comprehensive look at the school's program, operation, and effect. The school determines how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices and the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached. It is a three-phased program: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, September 16, 2003, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to meet the requirements referred to above.

The entire staff of Weber Basin High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Vern Brown is commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for the generally fine program being provided for Weber Basin High School students, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more adequately meet the needs of the students of Weber Basin High School.

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WEBER BASIN HIGH SCHOOL

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Kathryn Vestal

Faculty

Martell Beeton
Gary Bullock
Joann Cook
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Sherry Wade
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Charlene Ziegler

WEBER BASIN HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide students with a strong foundation for lifelong learning by nurturing, guiding and challenging them to achieve maximum potential in a rapidly changing and increasingly complex society.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

All students have equal opportunity to learn regardless of ethnic or cultural background.

Every student is valued and has a right to learn in a safe environment.

We must provide alternative learning approaches for students with learning disabilities.

Students' use of drugs, alcohol, violence or any gang related activities are detrimental to students' success and will not be tolerated on center.

The student is ultimately responsible for his/her own education.

Weber Basin is committed to continuous improvement that will enable students to become confident, self-directed, lifelong learners and successful, contributing members of society.

A variety of instructional approaches are necessary to help students meet their various learning needs.

We must recognize a student's individual talents and achievements while creating an environment and desire to excel.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Andrew Odoardi, Administrator, Salt Lake City School District, Chair

George Miller, Education Specialist, Utah State Office of Education

Georgia Loutensock, Education Specialist, Utah State Office of Education

VISITING TEAM REPORT
WEBER BASIN HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

The Weber Basin High School is the educational program for high school-age participants in the Weber Basin Job Corps Center and is directed toward providing at-risk youth a second chance to successfully meet their social and educational aspirations. The specific charge of the Center is to “develop human potential to the best of our ability, through behavior modification, social skills, education, and vocational training.” Part of the charge is met through the residential/vocational program, and part through the work of the high school. However, there is a clear, focused integration of purposes that link together the total program of the Center.

The school appears to have employed a systematic and broad-ranged process in collecting and organizing the profile data. The analysis of the profile data includes the identification of the school’s strengths and limitations and, to a great extent, offers a clear description of the performance of the school. The information from the profile was utilized in shaping the school improvement plan.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

The profile offers a detailed look at the school’s staffing, student population, environment, and curriculum, as well as the mission of the school. The school utilized the NSSE surveys for student, teacher, and community perceptions, and the survey for instructional and organizational effectiveness. The school rated well above average on most of the Department of Labor performance-based standards. Students must meet specific social and economic criteria. It is an open entry/open exit program, which accepts students twice per month. Only one-third of the students have completed 10th or 11th grade in a regular high school program. One quarter of the students are special education students. The student-teacher ratio in the academic program is about 15:1. The school uses a work-based learning program.

b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

Using and describing the correlation of the school’s program and the Training Achievement Record (TAR) to the SCANS Report and the USOE Life Skills curriculum would offer a more complete picture of the students’ learning, skills development, and work-readiness. There is ample evidence of quality documentation of student progress relative to the school’s program standards. The

Visiting Team feels that the use of the correlated data would provide a clearer picture of the work of the school.

From discussions with administration and school leadership, it was evident the staff has initiated the process of collecting student data and using the data to make decisions regarding school improvement goals, staff development needs, and allocation of resources. Although this is not presented in the school's profile, the staff did examine GPA data in considering appropriate school improvement goals.

Many of the school's strengths discovered by the Visiting Team were not clearly identified in the report. For example, many of the teachers used a variety of effective instructional practices, and these were not mentioned in the report. Additionally, the staff's high level of collegiality, passion for students, willingness to engage in professional development opportunities without compensation, student recognition programs, and innovative use of time to collaborate are just a few of the school's strengths that were not highlighted in the self-study.

The staff recognizes their strengths as effective educators, and yet most of the staff is willing to endorse the concept of continuous improvement on behalf of their students. As the school becomes savvy about using the self-study process to accurately identify student achievement gaps (profiling), reflect on current educational practices (departmental analysis), and examine organizational practice (focus groups), they will become more effective at identifying both their strengths and limitations in light of current "best practices."

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

Teachers and staff members reported and evidenced the opportunity to collaborate in the development of the self-study report. The school has considerable support and direction from the federal government, which oversees the operation. The Davis School District also assists with opportunities for professional development and support for the school. Guidelines and procedures for teachers, administrators, students, and support staff are well established and support students' needs very well.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The self-study is frank and honest in its assessment of what the school should be doing and what was actually happening.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Weber Basin High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. Personal and Social Responsibility
2. Thinking and Reasoning Skills
3. Employability Skills
4. Learning to Learn Skills
5. Adult Level Skills in Mathematics, Reading and Writing
6. Increased Technology in the Classroom

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

Evidence from discussion with the school staff indicates that the school personnel worked collaboratively to build a shared vision for the school. The school used information from the profiling process and the NSSE Survey on Goals for Student Learning.

The mission statement clearly indicates what the school is about.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The belief statements clearly express that the school personnel are willing to make a commitment to students and the values and direction indicated by the school's beliefs.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

The mission and belief statements are in clear alignment. The expectations for student learning are stated in clear and measurable goals. There are indicators of student achievement listed for each DRSL in order to assess the progress of students.

It is recommended that, in addition to the indicators, the staff more clearly link the standard of performance that has been met by the students to each of the DRSLs.

The Visiting Team suggests that there be improvement in addressing and making more evident what the DRSLs are and what they mean in reference to the mission and beliefs that drive the work of the school. Perhaps the DRSLs could be posted in each classroom.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

Teachers were aware and supportive of the Utah Core Curriculum. Most had direct access, and it was evident in their lesson materials.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

Although it is evident that schoolwide conversations have taken place around the accreditation process, all staff members cannot articulate a clear academic focus specifically tied to the DRSLs. The desired results for student learning do not clearly reflect the outcomes of these discussions. Therefore, increasing schoolwide attention to the desired results for student learning (DRSLs) will enable the school community to have a clearer focus around curriculum and instruction. The DRSLs are broad enough to encompass and reinforce the effective practices already occurring at the school. Beginning stages of schoolwide focus (i.e., reading/writing/math across content) are emerging and need to be formalized into a schoolwide plan. Clarifying and refining specific action steps connected to the DRSLs will help drive this plan. Formal and informal steps have been taken to promote a collaborative culture. Staff members are willing to invest personal time to accomplish school goals. As a result of this investment, each student who commits to and works at his or her learning plan manifests academic progress.

As noted earlier, the Utah Life Skills document would be a most appropriate guideline that could be incorporated in a more obvious manner. It would provide good language for much of what the school already addresses.

Though the Visiting Team did not meet extensively with the resident hall managers or their staff, they are typically the focus of where the Life Skills curriculum is being taught and promoted on a daily basis with the students, especially before and after school.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

The teaching staff is familiar with the Utah Core Curriculum, and it is central to the course content being taught. Individualized instruction comprises the main form of instructional delivery to the students. Teachers are able to individually assess each student frequently, which allows for a variety of learning experiences. The 50/50 plan of classes, then applied technology experiences (Welding, Painting, Maintenance, Bricklaying, Carpentry, mentoring, and actual work experience), works to provide real-life situational learning experiences that appear to motivate the students to want to learn and provide an atmosphere of competence and success. Students appear happy and involved in their school experiences.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

Each student receives an incoming diagnostic test (TABE) and monthly evaluations with a teacher, counselor, and administrator. Individualized learning activities are prescribed and implemented for each student. Individualized learning plans can be easily revised to meet students' needs throughout their school experience at Weber Basin High School.

The work-based learning opportunities provide a truly meaningful way to both learn and apply learning. There is a specific monthly opportunity for students to reflect the integration between the vocational instruction and academic coursework.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

Teachers and training staff (ATE) work very closely together to support a variety of student learning opportunities. Teachers go to the Welding Shop or the Carpentry Shop to work directly with the trainers and students at least twice a month on specific training activities. Math and reading activities are stressed in all of the learning experiences.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or schoolwide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

Both classroom and schoolwide assessments are well embedded in the practices of the school. Incoming assessments and monthly student assessments are geared toward competency standards. Student proficiency at a particular skill or activity, rather than the receiving of a simple grade, is stressed. Students cannot move on in their work unless they attain a basic competence at a particular level of skill, at which point they advance to the next level and continue working there. Job performance, attitude, and length of stay are all combined to award students with a monthly salary and status (code colors are used for permissions—Gold, Blue, Grey, Green, etc.).

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

A national standard of performance for job skills is extensively used. It is called the TAR (Training Achievement Record). The TARs are established by all Job Corps sites and are uniform throughout the nation. Teachers and students are expected to use them rather than a grading performance. Teachers sign off (initial) each skill as it is manifested in the student's program.

Again, as mentioned above, we recommend a clearer linkage between the DRSLs and the standards being met by the quality of the indicators.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

All assessments are used extensively and frequently. Since the program is based on an individualized, open-entry/open-exit type of program, all students must participate. The assessments provide a fair and meaningful way to structure a student's learning program and set appropriate goals.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

The staff and administration project a positive attitude toward learning. Teachers and administrators work in a close relationship with students. The low student-teacher ratio (15:1) enables many staff members to interact with students throughout the day. The Visiting Team did not observe students who were uninvolved or detached from the school. A zero-tolerance policy for unacceptable behavior (fighting, theft, drugs, etc.) is rigidly enforced, and students appear to feel safe and to want to be at the school.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

Decision making is guided by a variety of factors. Job Corps standards and policies and state and district requirements are all brought into the mix for collaborative decision making. In addition, teachers, administration, and staff are frequently using testing and performance criteria to evaluate students. Decisions on placement, rank, pay, and class activities are all based upon those evaluations.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

Student performance is closely monitored and used to inform subsequent instructional strategies. Measuring student achievement is a comprehensive activity with every instructor and trainer. The school is responsible for monitoring and reporting the overall effectiveness of its program, as demonstrated by the progress of students. A good example was observed in the Masonry Building. Students were constructing masonry walls in a mock-up of a building. Working in groups of two, students had to plan and properly construct a 4 x 8-foot brick wall of particular design. The instructor was frequently circulating with students. Students had many opportunities to repetitively build their skills. The Visiting Team observed similar activities with food services, welding, painting, and office skills. The same processes were evident in the academic setting as well.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

The Visiting Team compliments the administrative team on their united effort in providing skillful stewardship. It is obvious that the facility is well maintained and that the students and staff support and admire the administration's efforts. Staff and students feel comfortable approaching the administration with their problems or concerns. The Center provides a safe environment for both students and staff.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

Resources are appropriately used to improve the school environment as well as provide the means for departments to achieve their goals.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The school leadership reflects a clear commitment to empowering the school community to provide input to determine the school's direction.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

The school is a residential facility for at-risk youth. Student projects and activities are tied to community needs. The Visiting Team observed numerous examples of students working and serving their fellow students and the school, as well as working in the community with service-learning opportunities. Last year, the entire school was highly involved in providing volunteer service at the Snowbasin Ski Area during the 2002 Olympic Winter Games hosted in Utah. Each craft area has made a contribution to the actual physical plant of the school in some way. This appears to engender a sense of pride and ownership in the Center and its programs.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The school is on the path toward establishing a culture of continuous learning and improvement. This effort is reflected in the action plan.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

The leadership in the school fully supports the faculty, and the faculty appears to fully support the leadership. There appears to be a strong desire to do what is best for students. The faculty needs to develop a clearer schoolwide focus on the desired results for student learning. The staff should continue to look at formal as well as informal assessments to collect data to verify that teaching strategies assure student learning.

**CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS
AND OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (NASCU)
STANDARDS I-XI**

Standard I – Educational Program

This standard is met.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

This standard is met.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

This standard is not met. The school should familiarize students with the Pioneer Media services available via the USOE website to facilitate research activities for which the students are responsible.

Standard V – Records

This standard is met.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met.

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

This standard is met.

Standard VIII – Administration

This standard is met.

Standard IX – Teacher Load

This standard is met.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the schoolwide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The action plan currently addresses several major concerns identified by the staff. These concerns address critical areas for improvement.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?*

The leadership team and administration, as well as some of the teaching staff, share a strong commitment to the action plan. However, it was apparent that some of the faculty members were unaware of the school's DRSLs and the impact that implementing the DRSLs will have on classroom instruction and assessment. The administration and leadership team will need to secure the commitment of the staff before proceeding to implement some portions of the action plan and Visiting Team recommendations.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan appear to be?*

The action plan currently does not recognize the need for monitoring and/or evaluating the effectiveness of the school's improvement plan. In order to monitor school improvement efforts and evaluate their effectiveness, the leadership still needs to identify what data/evidence should be collected and periodically analyzed by the team.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The individualized curricular approach to meet student needs first is employed, and is an effective method to help at-risk youth learn basic life skills and become employable.

- Students were observed to be enthusiastic and motivated to participate in the school activities.
- The staff and administration are to be commended for their conscious and diligent efforts in creating a positive culture and climate conducive to teaching and learning.
- The staff and administration are to be commended for continued efforts in identifying the needs of students, and in creating a positive community image for Weber Basin High School. This image includes providing a safe learning environment, holding high expectations for student learning, and having a staff characterized by caring educators willing to do whatever is necessary to help students succeed.
- The staff is to be commended on a sincere effort to conduct a candid self-study of their school and to use this process to identify improvement efforts on behalf of the students and parents they serve.

Recommendations:

- A wider variety of options for students could be offered. The Utah Electronic High School has indicated that any student at Weber Basin High School would be accepted (at no charge) to participate in any class offering. Please see <http://ehs.uen.org/?bbatt=Y?bbatt=Y> for particulars about particular courses of interest. Mr. Richard Siddoway, principal, has indicated that any student would be welcome. He can be contacted at 801-538-7736 for more information.
- The Instructional Television systems of KUED and KULC provide activities geared specifically toward the Weber Basin High School student. See <http://www.uen.org/kulc/whatson> and the GED website, both sponsored by the Utah State Office of Education and Utah Education Network (<http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/adulted/GED/index.html>) for more details.
- The school should continue to refine its self-study document by (1) collecting additional data, then disaggregating and analyzing student data, and (2) aligning the action plan to address findings resulting from the profile and departmental analysis. This would include posting the DRSLs as expectations in more obvious ways.
- The school needs to engage the whole staff in collaborative inquiry with regard to the school's DRSLs. This would include:
 - Increasing schoolwide understanding of the purpose and criteria used for selecting the DRSLs.

- Collectively studying best practices and research in the teaching and assessing of the school's DRSLs.
 - Developing a means of evaluating student work relative to the DRSLs in order to determine whether or not Weber Basin High School students become more effective communicators and better critical thinkers (inductive and deductive reasoning) as a result of attending the school.
- Continue to seek innovative ways of increasing opportunities for teachers to collaborate for the purpose of staff development, sharing best practices and implementing the school's action plan.